

# INTEGRITY

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# CREATIVE

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ACTIVITY

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## EDITORIAL



It may be giving the wrong impression by entitling this issue *Creative Activity*. That is why we hasten to say that it is not an issue on unessentials, on hobbies or ceramics classes. We are not concerned with the frills of living but with daily life. And creative activity does have to do with daily life including as it should not only man's leisure time pursuits but above all his daily work. And we may remark parenthetically that leisure time pursuits are generally creative in proportion to the creative character of daily work.

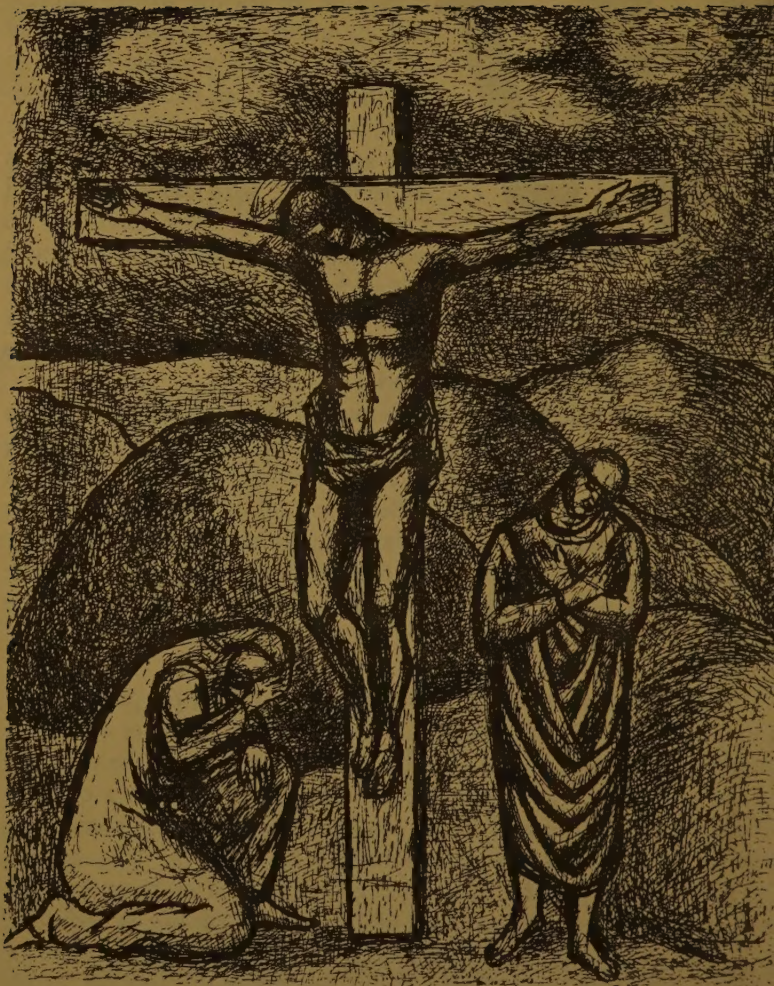
Men are called to use the powers God gave them to make and to cultivate those things necessary for life on earth. The married couple are even more directly co-creators with God in giving life to their children. But the highest creative work in which man partakes is the one the Holy Spirit (*Creator Spiritus*) effects in the soul destined to be transformed and united with the Bridegroom Christ. This is merely to indicate the scope of the topic. In the following articles its various aspects are discussed in detail.

One word of caution: it is not enough to tell people who are unhappy and do not know what to do with themselves that they should be creative. ("Go and learn how to sew." "Take a course in arts and crafts.") The root problem is to give them a creative attitude toward life, and this is no easy thing. To do something creative presupposes that one wants to be creative. The inertia, the lack of desire is the problem. To rekindle it craft courses are not sufficient; a radical change of one's view of life is required.

The adult who has struggled to achieve a creative view of life but who was not brought up to use his mind and his hands will still face a problem. Like a seventy-year old who decides to learn to ski he will find himself creaky and awkward and wishing again for the days of his youth. And that reminds us that creative activity must start in the home. Children who are brought up in a creative tradition where they make music, grow vegetables and bake cake as an integral part of the scheme of things may not turn out to be geniuses but they are more likely to know what to do with their hands, as well as with their time and their life.

THE EDITOR





## The Creative Word

**S**EVERAL months ago Father Vann gave a lecture on being creative which inspired us to have this issue. He is the author of *The Divine Pity*, *The Heart of Man*, and more recently *The High Green Hill*.

**Gerald Vann, O.P.:** All living means in effect a searching for pattern, a formula, a word of life which will give meaning and purpose to existence and bring happiness in its train. And for the Christian this must mean the search for the Word, the *Logos*, imitating Whom the image and likeness of God is brought forth in us. But the divine Word is a creative Word: "All things were made by him, and without him was made nothing that was made." Christian living, then, is meant to be creative living: every man is called (has a vocation) to make something of his life, of the gifts God has given him, natural and supernatural; and we misunderstand fundamentally the nature of Christianity, unless we see it in all its aspects and expressions, not as a negative and destructive thing, but as a constant affirmation and creation of life.

### **the vocation to creative work**

Every human being has a vocation—and therefore a right—to creative work: to be some sort of artist, to make something with his hands or his brain. The poet, the farmer, the baker, the statesman, the teacher, the sailor, are all in their different ways creative, and are therefore to that extent leading a sane and healthy life. (Compare the aridity of the bureaucrat, which is revealed even in the lifeless jargon which for him passes as language.) But if it is true that the artist lives to work (instead of having to work, like the man with the uncreative "job," in order to live), at the same time it is also true that, in the aristotelean phrase, we work in order to have leisure—the leisure to contemplate, to acquire and then to deepen a vision of reality; for contemplation is the condition of creative activity. Leisure, then, in its turn is meant to be creative. We can measure the unhealthiness of our society by reflecting on the extent to which nowadays men are condemned, or condemn themselves, not only to uncreative work but to uncreative leisure as well. If the symbol of work today is too often the assembly line, the symbol of leisure is too often the television.

### **maker of love**

Every human being, in the second place, has a vocation to be a maker of love; and this too can proceed only from contemplation. Normally this will mean first of all the common creation by a man and a woman of their love for each other—and on every level of their many-levelled life, senses, emotions, mind, heart—and of the expression of that mutual love in home and family. It will mean too the making of friendship; it will mean the making of that wider understanding and love which embraces all the earth and its fullness. And all these forms of love will be wise and deep



and lasting, and will lead to happiness, only to the extent to which they live and grow within, and are determined by, a greater love: the Spirit Who is the love of Father and Son for each other.

That idea of a life lived within the Spirit and conditioned by the Spirit leads us to a third way in which man is meant to be creative: in the making of the moral life. Far too often Christian morality is seen as a purely negative and restrictive thing. This misapprehension may be due sometimes to a faulty pedagogy; you could do untold damage, for instance, by merely insisting that this or that form of sensuality was forbidden without going on to explain that a constant indulgence in it would lead to disintegration, and that to forbid it is in fact to inculcate its creative opposite: a fine and vital sense-awareness and love of material things, growing within the love of God and therefore in humble reverence and poverty of spirit.

To paint the Christian life merely in terms of an avoidance of evil or an eradication of sin is to miss its whole meaning. No man can live in a vacuum. When the house was swept and garnished the Devil returned, bringing with him seven other Devils. The conquering of sin is either the negative aspect of the discovery of Love or there is nothing Christian about it at all. And indeed Christianity is not in fact content with inculcating the positive aspect of the negative Commandments: Thou shalt not kill or steal or commit adultery, but shalt respect the lives and property and homes of others. Our Lord tells us that He came not to destroy but to fulfil the Law; and to fulfil it precisely by taking it from its negative minimum to its positive maximum; thus making it an expression of the supreme law of love. Not only are we to respect the lives of others, but if necessary are to try to be ready to lay down our own lives for our friend; not only must we respect others' property, but if necessary must try to be ready to surrender our own to others' needs; we must respect family life but in addition we may be asked to surrender a family life of our own. This positive maximum may not be demanded of us; it may be a question not of command but of counsel; but at least it shows us how our thinking should be directed; it shows us that the end in view ultimately is not just virtue but holiness.

Virtue, in its usual acceptation, is to holiness as prose is to poetry; the prose of life is conformity to a pattern, but the poetry is itself a creation of a pattern, the gifts of the Spirit that "bloweth where it listeth," and that give to the Christian life when lived in its fullness that unexpectedness, spontaneity, lyricism, effortless power, with which the lives of the saints are filled.

## creative social life

A creative moral life is also of necessity a creative social life. Sanctity cannot exist in a vacuum; nor can the saint. For him there can be no ivory tower; the love that is in him drives him to share in the redemptive work of Christ in the world. His love is universal; which is to say that he is every man's friend.

If you look up the word friendship (*amicitia*) in the index to the *Summa Theologica* you find two main references. In the first Saint Thomas, describing the man in whom this virtue (which he connects with justice) resides, states first of all that he is not *rusticus*, not a "rustic" but urbane. (There is a nice commentary on our modern world in the fact that urban and urbane are far from having the same meaning, and that if you look for courtesy nowadays you are far more likely to find it in the countryside than in the public places of the modern city.) His urbanity, Saint Thomas continues, is manifested in a readiness to listen benignly and to speak cheerfully; and he acts thus always, not because of some quality in others but because of what he is in himself. Saint Thomas is in fact quoting from Aristotle's description of the "civic virtues" which denote the gentleman; this then is not friendship at all but friendliness, *affabilitas*: and is there anything specifically Christian about it?

## the communication of love

You turn to the other reference, where *amicitia* is found not under justice but under charity—as, indeed, the definition of charity. But we are to love all men; whereas friendship is of its nature restricted; how can the two things be identical? There are, says Saint Thomas, three elements in friendship: you must will the good of your friend; and that good will must be mutual, which means for your part that you must be prepared not only to give but to receive; and thirdly, there must be a *communicatio*: a sharing of life, of ideas and ideals and dreams, of labors and joys and sorrows. And as this is possible between man and God (in so far as man comes gradually to know and share the mind and the redeeming work of the Word there is *communicatio*), so also it is possible in essence between a man and all other men: in so far as he is greathearted enough to will the good of all men, humble enough to be ready to be helped by any man, and loving enough to be ready to share the dreams, the needs, the sorrows, of any man who comes his way. Here indeed you have something much deeper than affability; here you have Christian charity; but charity must inform all the virtues, and when in fact you have this creative charity informing the civic virtue, when you have a courtesy which



is not external, superficial, but motivated by a deep love, then you have a power which can move the world, a power creative of unity between people and between peoples.

What then must charity achieve in us in order to make this universal interest possible? First of all it must keep alive in us a creative mind: open, uninhibited, receptive, and therefore sympathetic to what is new and strange. Nothing is easier as life goes on than to sink back into well-worn grooves of thought and prejudice from which there is no emergence, to become set in an intellectual immobility, a sort of hardening of the psychological arteries; but this is to make a universal charity impossible. You cannot have a house of hospitality in which the windows are forever shuttered and the doors forever barred.

### **the creative heart**

But with the creative mind must go the creative heart. It is interesting to compare two recent views of history as divided into three contrasting ages. Nicholas Berdyaev wrote of the age of Dante, in which men accepted a cosmic order given from without by a transcendent God; of the age of Shakespeare, which repudiated that belief and acceptance and worshipped instead the purely immanent god of humanity; and a third age, the modern age, in which the dark underworld which humanism had ignored erupted: evil and horror could no longer be denied, but at the same time it became possible once again to discover God, not a purely transcendent deity, nor the immanent pseudo-deity of pagan humanism but God at once transcendent and immanent, immanent in the sins and sorrows of mankind, the God of pity. (It is this discovery of the redemptive God within the weaknesses and squalors of man that writers such as Graham Greene help us to understand.)

On the other hand there is a view—deriving from but correcting the teaching of the medieval abbot Joachim of Flora—which sees the history of the world as a whole in terms of the three ages of Father, Son and Holy Ghost; not that the third in any sense supersedes the dominion of the Son, but that within that dominion, within the structure of Christendom, there is to be a growth of inwardness, a flowering of contemplation, of charity, which will mean that the impact of the Christian world upon the pagan will become less and less exclusively a question of a rational statement of doctrine and more and more a question of the impact, on the hearts and souls of men, of God-filled personalities. And perhaps in these days of stress and tragedy we approach a point at which these two things, the two “third ages,” will in fact coalesce: a point at which the Spirit will in fact re-create and



enlarge in men a creative heart: a heart which, having found God anew in the squalors, will be set on fire by that discovery, and will not only know about but live the Truth, not merely rationally acknowledge and preach but ontologically radiate the divine Fire.

### **to accept reality**

Certainly it must be the duty of the Christian today to do what he can to prepare for such an age. And that means first of all to accept life. Be what you are, instead of trying to pretend that you are something else which you would like to be. Be what you are before God, accept your nothingness before God, accept the fact that before God you are "poor and stripped and naked," and so allow God's presence and power to enter into you and act through you. Accept the earth and its fullness as God's creation and God's gift, to be loved for itself instead of selfishly and greedily. Accept the pattern of things, the designs of divine providence, the darkness as well as the light; accept the limitations and weaknesses as well as the gifts and the graces. Accept the wholeness of the human personality, nature as well as grace; and use the natural gifts within the life of grace in order to serve and praise God. One sometimes meets today among Catholics a fear of nature in general and an almost Buchmanite repudiation of reason in particular which are very disturbing. No, we do not as Catholics expect special guidance, a private revelation, for every practical decision to be made; we believe that our reasons are given us to be used, to decide for ourselves how best we shall serve God and the world, within the framework of revealed truth and the Church's teaching. The creative mind, the creative heart, exercised in creative work and love and the quest for holiness and in all human relationships: this is what mirrors and expresses the creative energy of the Word and fulfils the Christian ideal.

### **creative darkness**

But in this positive acceptance of life in its wholeness it is perhaps, in these days especially, the acceptance of darkness that must have the last word. In the beginning there was the darkness of chaos, and it was out of that darkness that light and form and beauty were born. And again, later, there was darkness over the whole earth, and out of that second darkness of crucifixion the re-created world was born. In one form or another, at some time or another, darkness comes to every human soul; and if it is met creatively, humbly and with trust in God's pity, there will come out of it the light of vision and the fire and energy of love; and when, and only when, there is in the world enough light and enough fire, the face of the earth will be renewed.



## Children and Creative Activity

**R**EADERS who know Caryll Houselander's books may not know of the invaluable work she has done among up-rooted and disturbed children. We asked her to write about her experiences and to illustrate her own article.

**Caryll Houselander:** If you study a diagram of the human brain you will see that almost a third of it is designed to control the movements of the hands. This ceases to surprise when you consider all that a man can do with his hands, and how different the things he does will be, according to what is in his mind.

One man will inflict a wound, another will heal one with his hands; one will strike, another will caress. There is an almost inexhaustible list of these things men do or can do with their hands, from the laying on of hands by the Bishop in Confirmation to the mother's hand holding the tiny one of her small child to reassure it in the dark.

The thing I want to consider now is *making things* with the hands, especially the things that artists make, and above all what we learn from watching children making things. I say what we learn, because I am certain that we cannot *teach* children "art," but we can learn many deep, often buried, and essential things about human nature itself, and about individual children and their needs, by watching them discover its meaning for themselves. It was through chance more than anything else that a group of oddly assorted children became, literally for me, the fortunes of war, and quite by chance that I discovered from them the power to heal and integrate that lies in art or, if you like, just in making things.



These children were refugees from Europe, very literally waifs from the storm of war, who in most cases had lost everything and I mean everything, not only their homes and their country, but their sense of security, their trust in mankind, and sometimes their own integrity. Many of them were suffering from shock, and their recent experiences had, I imagined, brought to the surface symptoms of difficulties that were there before, perhaps congenitally, but had been unsuspected.

They came from every strata of society, from professions and trades and business; some were the children of scavengers, some were intellectual types, others natural manual laborers. Their ages ranged from four years old to eighteen; but they brought younger ones to my one-room "school," and on one occasion, a father with a fierce black Hitler moustache and the manner of a brigand—who presented himself as "a pupil" with such insistence that it finally became necessary to form a small class of adults too.

I was supposed to teach these children, though less from the point of view of educating them than of occupying them, in order—since none of them fitted into the real schools—to keep them from running wild in the streets, on which German bombs happened to be falling with depressing regularity day and night.

With the passing of the years since then, I have made friends with many other children who in one way or another were adrift, some from behind the Iron Curtain, some from close at home, but who were "retarded" or "delinquent" or in some other way "mal-adjusted." But what I could do for these others was given to me and taught to me by that first motley crowd of refugees.

### **communication**

Our first difficulty was how to speak to each other. They did not speak my language, I did not speak theirs, they did not all speak each others—we were in a tower of Babel! There was only one way out, to *do*, as the cave men did, say what we wanted to by drawing pictures. After all, handwriting is only drawing countless tiny pictures of what is in your mind, and it started by the pictures the cave man drew on the walls of his cave.

Those pictures in the caves were not only messages about danger and hunger and such things; they were also, and perhaps oftener, pictures which said that the man who had made them rejoiced in the sheer vitality and beauty of the thing he drew, that in his heart there was delight in something, some animal or bird, or the shining of the sun, or an occupation of his own, like hunting, or making tools and weapons; and he could not contain this delight, he must share it with others, and the only way he could do

that was to throw it outside himself, out of the wordless inward abstraction of his secret, inarticulate mind into concrete, visible form. Thus and only thus could he give shape and color to his inward joy, and so give his joy to other men.

In the earliest cave drawings we do not see merely a drawing of an animal, but of what a certain man delighted in about a particular animal.

There is nothing photogenic in these drawings, they are quite selective. Some show just the two or three long swinging lines that point to the rhythm rippling through the body of that wild beast, others the streak of his swift flight, just that which the artist loved, and nothing else, nothing superfluous, nothing unnecessary.

### **the vague and terrible fears**

As I have said, the earliest drawings were sometimes pictures not of what a man delighted in but of what he feared. They might be something he feared in his own secret soul, and which was all the more frightening because it was formless. He must, if he was to overcome it, come face to face with it and look it squarely in the eyes, this could only be done, in the case of a real "bogey" (an abstract thing in his own inner consciousness), by giving it shape and form himself, so that he could look at it and, still more important, put it under his own control.

As men developed there arose a superstition among some of them that if a person allowed himself to be drawn he fell into the power of the artist. To this day gypsies will refuse to be drawn or photographed, because they believe that he who has their image has power over them.

Children are in a sense primitive people. Every little child is a cave man, a new man in a world which to him is new.

Nearly every child is inarticulate about that which concerns him most deeply—when he reaches an age in which he has emotional responses to other people he is almost totally unable to express them, especially in words. About that which causes him to suffer, and about the vague yet terrible fears which invade him in secret, he is usually dumb.

With a young child then, art (in this case I mean drawing pictures, or making things in putty or some such substance) is as truly as it was to primitive men, a means of *communication* and of *liberation*.

This I discovered very early among my refugee children, give them paper and paint and crayons and putty and they will be able, even if you cannot (as I could not) speak their language, to tell you what is within them.



Now it is a necessity to all human beings to reveal the secrets of their soul—to express their inmost love, their secret joy, to externalize their hidden, and often unformulated fears.

To do that is the simplest and most primitive use of art.

There was one little boy who had a bogey of his own, some buried terror which, though (and largely because) he could not describe it to anyone, had made of him a mass of nerves, a victim of habits that exasperated his family, and not only anti-social to other children, but, if they ever made advances to him, positively aggressive in his self-defense. Inevitably their "advances" changed to teasing and unconscious cruelty.

This little boy began to make things with putty. At first he made potatoes and rather shapeless little animals. He never looked up while he worked, he never if he could help it, allowed anyone to see what he made, if anyone approached him while he was at work he tried to cover his little table with his body. Then one day he made his bogey. This time he did not hide it, but led me by the hand to it. There could be no possible doubt that it was meant to be a horrible thing, and certainly he had achieved that, the tiny image looked almost obscene.

The little boy looked at it with an expression of triumph, there was his bogey, that formless, colorless, nebulous horror that no one had been able to kill because no one could see it or touch it, given shape and substance, and made small enough to be crushed in *his* hand.

He had made it, it was smaller than he, it was within his power, and he could kill it!

Kill it he did, crushing it back into shapelessness and then breaking it into pieces.

It was after that that he began to play with other children.

## **art is communion**

When the artist, child or man, makes an image, not of what he fears, but of what he loves—his art is more than communication, it is *communion* with others. It is the means by which he gives the wonder of his inward self to other people, and when they respond to him by delighting in the thing he has made, it is because it also expresses that which was inarticulate in their own souls. In the thing of beauty made by a man's hands, the thing into which he has put his own life, other men recognize the secrets of their own inward lives. This is why we love old tables and chairs and such things, polished by the touch of many caressing hands, and why we want to touch them with our own hands. It is our response to the craftsman who is long dead, but whose life still comes

to us in his work, our communion with someone no longer on earth, through the thing he made on earth.

A little French girl among my children made birds from scraps of felt and organdy, which were so exquisite that everyone who looked at them laughed with joy. They showed the winged, dancing quality of the child's inward life, and though they were only little pieces of material, somehow they spoke of freedom, of rising into the pure blue summer skies as effortlessly as the lark. With a trueness of instinct that was characteristic of her, this little girl brought her bright birds to the grey basement used for an air-raid shelter. It was her communion with us all, who longed for freedom and skies into which our hearts could ascend again.

### **one's own medium**

I have mentioned various materials. It is important for children, for everyone, to choose their own materials. Those children in school who are restricted to one medium because it is more convenient for the teacher, are to be pitied. They will miss one of the most essential things in art—that which I call its sacramental quality.

Children should be given every kind of material that they can be given. Mud, sand, wood, paints, felt, paper, metal, water, putty and so on. God, after all, has given every substance in the world to them; He has given them seed and earth and seas and stars, shells and flowers and leaves and grass and stones and trees.

When the craftsman lays his hands upon the material into which he can most easily pour his own secret life, his touch is a caress; it is the touch of love. He will know at once that this is the substance which can receive his dream, this it is that shaped by his hands will be the shape of his shapeless longing, and will contain that which is within him and yet his heart cannot contain.

A man is never really whole until he has found that material which is for him the potential substance of his dreams. For one it will be that (to me) most beautiful of all substances, wood, wood which *lives* under the carver's hand. Another will discover his medium in earth, the rich soil that he can dig and sow and tend, until it seems to him that the spring he longed for all winter flowers from his own finger tips. Others will, like my little French girl, find woollen and cotton materials, or silk. And there are other substances to which we shall refer later, dough and flour and all the things women use to cook with, which also, through the loving contact of human hands, give tangible form to the intangible secrets of the human soul.



## **sacramental life**

People who fail completely to make any contact through their hands, with any substance that can take the shape of their thought, often become insane—or perhaps it is because they are already insane that they lack the capacity. The mind which is absolutely unable to tether its dreams to anything tangible, or to give them shape and solidity in any material, or to sow them in any solid earth, is likely to become more and more formless and to drift more and more uncontrollably into realms of unreality.

In this we have an example in a very wide sense of "Unless the seed falling into the earth die, it remaineth itself alone." Perhaps the supreme tragedy of being insane is that of being inescapably and always alone.

The reason why this contact with substance and this going out of himself into some visible substance, which he can see and touch, is so necessary to man, is because man is a sacramental creature and he is made in the likeness of God. The more closely his daily life expresses his likeness to God, the more sane, the more complete a man will be.

It is easy to see how the artist who puts his life into his clay or his wood is like God when we think of man's creation, of God taking the dust and breathing His life into it to make man.

It becomes more and more obvious when we think how Christ, the Son of God, used the humblest substances as the medium through which to give His love to men; mud and spittle on the blind man's eyes, the medium of His mercy. Writing in the dust with His finger, the medium of compassion, and for the final miracle of love, the gift of *Himself*, the simplest of all substances, bread. As if to remind us day after day that our life is by God's plan, the life of body and soul together, our supernatural life is given to us by the Church and continually renewed in us, sacramentally, through the use of the simplest substances, water, oil, salt, bread and wine.

Above all, we can see how artistic creation, approached as it should be, in humility and love, is a likeness to God, through the Incarnation.

The Word of God, the unutterable Word of the Father's love is uttered in Christ. The boundless is bound in swaddling bands, the Word is made flesh.

## **a liberation**

This mystery was shown to me by the experience of one boy. He was an adolescent, full of turmoil and bitterness. Every circumstance in his life had combined to twist him. He was above

all afflicted by a sense of injustice and felt himself, in sheer angry self-defense, the enemy of society. If ever I have seen a human creature scourged and wounded and mocked by suffering, it was he. If ever I have seen one thrown down and crushed by the weight of the Cross, it was he. If ever I have seen one stripped naked and exposed to the misunderstanding, mockery and reproach of the world, it was he.

The material he chose to work in was wood; and like the little boy with the bogey, he worked in a corner alone, hiding his efforts. But when the work was done, it was no bogey or imp, it was a crucifix, carved crudely, yet with amazing skill. And the face, *a face of terrible suffering, was smiling!* It was the face of the young carver himself, his own features unmistakably, but transformed by that amazing smile on the face of the Crucified Christ.

That boy changed. The sudden realization of himself *indwelt by Christ*, flooded the bitterness out of him, and he became "a Christ" to the others.

### **the meaning of work**

We have seen that art, making things, above all making one's own image and likeness, is a means of liberating and healing, and a means to communion. It teaches a child that basic lesson of life, the secrets of his own nature, that he is made in the likeness of God and in the pattern of Christ, and that in order to be happy through his humanity, he must live in the way that satisfies the needs, not of a cog in a machine, but of a man indwelt by God.

There is something else too, something immensely important that the child will learn from making things, this is the meaning of work, what work should be to a man or woman.

There is a common delusion that work is a punishment for sin, a hideous necessity. That it is something to be endured for the money it brings in, but a person's real life only begins when he leaves his work and seeks distraction or amusement outside it.

Yet for the average person, work takes up nearly the whole of his waking life! It is a mistake to suppose that work was intended, in the first place, to be a punishment for sin.

Work was not introduced into man's life *after* Adam sinned, but before, at the time when Adam's whole life was an uninterrupted awareness of God's presence, and his uninterrupted delight was a continual contemplation of God's goodness, beauty and love. Work was given to him as one means to that contemplation.

While the first dew still shone on the grass, the waters still trembled in the breath of the Spirit, and man's soul was as pure



as the water and the dew, ". . . the Lord God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it."

Man was to know God by reflecting God's joy in creating the world, in his own soul; his work was to be a way of entering into and sharing the experience of God Himself.

He was to know the marvel of seeing the seed that had fallen from his finger tips into the earth, flowering under his feet, and to know, in so far as a finite creature can know the Infinite, the God Who made the multitudinous beauty of the world, in stars, and moon and sun, and flowers, wind and water, shadows and light, and rejoiced because He had made it. "And God saw everything that he had made, and behold it was very good."

### **no easy creation**

That which *did* follow on sin, as part of man's punishment was that his work was to become a painful effort to him. He was no longer able to make anything with the ease of a creator, no longer would beauty overflow from his heart spontaneously and pour from his hands, flooding the world with its life—no, now he must wrestle with nature, and the substances he would work in would not yield to him unless he literally strove with them in the sweat of his brow.

"In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, til thou return into the ground."

But Christ, Himself working in the sweat of His face, restored even this aspect of work to its glory, making it again a constant act of adoration.

The artist, and I count a good craftsman as an artist, knows the cost of acquiring skill; it is only those who do approach their work with the artist's attitude who will go through the necessary years of daily effort, practice and patience. To become a skilled craftsman means imposing upon oneself the discipline that forms character.

It would be impossible, for example, for an impatient, careless man to become a skilled woodworker. The uninitiated watching a carpenter at work suppose it easy—and indeed nothing is more lovely than to watch the apparent ease with which he planes and cuts and fits his wood. The rhythmic, swinging movements of his arms, the long easy sweep of his plane, the shavings falling away lightly curled and thin as rose petals. And then the exactitude with which the pieces fit together and interlock, and all the time the man's obvious pride and pleasure in his work.

Yes, it looks easy, and it has become easy too for the master craftsman, but what long self-discipline has produced that ease in

him, that precision and lightness of touch, that flowing movement, and what constant application has enabled him to sharpen and set his tools to cut clean and to know his different woods, with their special grains, and even their special moods!

It is this apprenticeship that restores man's pride and dignity in work and fits him to do the work that makes his own soul luminous in the shadow of the Trinity.

Now if we turn back to the diagram of the brain and study it again, remembering the reasons why it is a need of man's nature to co-ordinate hands and mind, it no longer seems strange at all that so much of the brain has been made for that very purpose. But if we turn from this study to the study of our contemporary society, we cannot be surprised by the prevalent discontent, joylessness and lack of direction or purpose that is its depressing characteristic.

### **co-ordinating mind and hands**

How many people today ever use their hands intelligently?—indeed how many there are who practically never use them at all!

Above all how many are there whose daily work means making something conceived in their own minds?

Again how many are there who can *choose* the work they are to do all their lives? And among the few who can choose, how many are there in whom the artist has not been destroyed, so that ignorant of their real needs they are often rejecting their true happiness by their choice?

Girls and boys go into factories at sixteen, or into shops or offices or one of the professions a year or two later. In the factories most people make, not a whole thing they want to, but part of something they probably never see whole.

Most people are working simply for the money they have to earn, and they only start to live when the day's work ends, and even then few start to live in any full sense, for most people go in search of machine-made entertainment and canned emotion.

When I think of these sad multitudes, I am reminded of those children who are "backward" or "maladjusted," who so often have very poor co-ordination between their hands and their minds. The workers of the world today seem to me very like those children, they seem to have lost that co-ordination. I believe the only remedy for the tragedy of our industrial civilization is to restore it.

My theory is grounded in the belief that every human being is an artist, simply because he is made in God's image and indwelt by His spirit.

The artist has been submerged in most men, but because it is his true nature, it can always be restored.

### **the artist in the child**

Again, I think of the backward children and of one in particular who, because she was regarded as "hopeless," typifies the sad multitude.

This child lived in a slum. She came regularly to a little group of children to whom I gave materials to work in, and she watched them working. Because her hands were so clumsy she was a source of irritation to her own family and was shunned by other children. She dropped things, broke things, she ate dirtily, she could not tie bows or fasten buttons. She was retarded, and utterly incapable of speaking about what was in her mind. I need not add that she was a very discouraged child, already accepting herself as being useless, even despicable.

Yet she came to the group, fascinated by watching them, pathetically longing to do something like they did. She hovered on the outskirts, going round behind the chairs of the workers, staring.

When the others had gone and I was mopping up the inevitable mess, this child stayed behind with me, usually watching with a faint pitiful smile.

One night she very gingerly took a rag and mopped up too. Then she did it night after night and came to do it well. From that time she began to have self-respect. Very slowly, very painfully she learned, by copying my hands, to tie bows, to fasten buttons, and crowning triumph, to brush and part her hair!

And one day she sat down at the table with the others and began to make things with plasticene.

I have seen many other children learn this co-ordination of head and hands in just this slow painful way, and with just this growing self-respect and happiness. Craftsmen acquiring their skill.

If *they* can restore the artist in themselves, so also can the adults of the world, but the adults, like the children, will only realize what it is that they lack and want if they *see* artists at work.

Artists are considered in these days to be something like freaks; "practical" people who do not realize that they are repressed artists themselves, mistrust them, and feel that they need some excuse, some justification for being artists. They are usually poor and, in the world's eyes, improvident, because for the sheer joy of their work they are content to remain poor.



If they do need a justification, they have one; it is that they show the world what every man's work should be like. It should be his joy. Moreover, they show what every man's work *would* be like had not the artist in him been stifled.

I do not think it over-optimistic to say that if the majority of men really saw the ideal of work, and wanted it, they would bring about a bloodless revolution. For whatever men *really* want they always get. When they want higher wages, they strike for them, when they want shorter hours, they strike for them, when they want better material conditions they strike for them—and they get them.

If the day comes when men strike for creative work, work that means contemplation and restores the worker to his glory—they will get happiness.

The first step in bringing that about is, don't destroy the artist in the child; every child is a poet until he is ten, and every child, so long as he is not taught, can draw and model until he is ten. But too many teachers destroy the poet and the artist in the child.

Art is regarded in many schools and homes as a luxury, a graceful but unnecessary accomplishment, or a hobby for leisure hours.

Thus it is divorced from life.

Too often art teachers impose their own ideas upon children; one sees whole pathetic classes struggling to draw, say a flower in an earthenware pot, with a lead pencil, to please a teacher who is as bored as they are. In these children the artist withers.

### **not for after-hours**

Art is a sacramental thing, it is a welding together and fusing together of spirit and matter, and the matter may be anything from glass to mud.

Art is not a hobby. Those who try to compensate for the soul-lessness of their work by using arts and crafts as a hobby outside working hours simply underline and condone the failure of our civilization.

What we need is to bring to whatever work we do the attitude of the artist, and if there is any kind of work that makes this *impossible*, choose not to do that kind—but make no mistake, in order to be an artist in work it is not necessary to be a painter or a sculptor or a specialist in any "fine art."

It makes no difference how seemingly humble the work is, it may be kneading a piece of dough to make a loaf, or mixing the flour to make a pie. It may be dusting or scrubbing, or polishing

a chair or table, as well as making one. It may be sewing a dress or making a toy for a child.

The thing that matters is that what we do is something we do with a strong desire to do it, and strong enough love at the core of it to make it worth while to acquire the skill, and to do it with the loving care and pride and joy of the skilled worker, and that into the work we put our own life. We must take hold of the ordinary things of the earth, and what is in our hearts must flow into them through the caressing touch of our hands.

It may not always be apparent even that we are making a thing, a work of art, for many of the things we do make every day are impermanent; the pie that is eaten, the little dress soon outgrown, the flower sown to bloom and wither so swiftly!

But the fact remains that with the substance of these passing things, and if we have it with the vision that is in a child's soul, we are making home, we are making happiness, we are making love, and through our daily work turned to contemplation, each one of us will know the secret splendor of "The Word is made flesh" in his own life.

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**The Capitalist: "The greatest work-incentive  
is unrelenting greed!"**

**Saint Paul: "Work your hands, and fashion goods,  
for those who are in need."**

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## "To Dig I Am Not Able"

**I***T should be the normal thing for man to be creative in his daily work. Ed Willock gives the Christian philosophy behind this idea.*

**Ed Willock:** The two most powerful ideas of reform in modern times, Marxist communism, and Catholic Action, have one point in common—a great concern for man as a *worker*. The condition of the working class, conditions attributable to the manner in which the mass of people work, have been the singular concern of both Christian and atheistic thinkers. Yet in local and parochial areas in the United States we select almost any other facet of living upon which to focus our attention rather than cope with the problems directly associated with earning a living. Home life, indigence, entertainment, play, and the conduct of parochial affairs are all being subjected to a searching analysis, whereas the manner in which the wage-earner spends most of his waking hours receives little if any apostolic attention. Need we search elsewhere to find the source of our ineffectuality as Catholics when we remain so remarkably out of touch with the main line of sociological investigation? Can we presume that a reform of leisure-time activities can succeed while the workday goes wholly unattended? Since when has Catholicism become a leisure-time activity?

### three theories of work

As Catholics, our reluctance to give ample consideration to men as *workers* has resulted in leaving the establishment of a philosophy of work up to the capitalist, the communist and the bohemian. Each of these three schools of thought contributed largely to what have become the popularly accepted attitudes toward work. These attitudes can hardly be questioned, so en-



trenched have they become, yet on careful examination it is obvious that they take little if any direction from Christianity. Consequently the wage-earning Catholic, along with his non-Catholic fellow workers, must subscribe to a wholly secular conception of work or else have no higher ideals in the matter than that of a beast foraging for sustenance. That there is a Christian philosophy of work which is one of the great heritages of Western culture, and which at the same time served as foundation for European civilization, is an historical fact known to few. It is small wonder then that the working man sees a gulf between himself and the Church, if he is unaware that there is any relevancy between Catholicism and the daily grind. It is unlikely that the influences to which he is hourly subjected every day of the week will be dispelled by Sunday sermons, especially if he is unaware of the direct relation between the message of Christ and his daily work. He can hardly help but conclude that religion is a sort of umpire that remains aloof from the game except to interject uncomfortable "Thou shalt nots" if he has not learned that Christianity is meant to be a wholly involved animating spirit within human work.

I might well take my key from the Church in writing this article, and begin my discussion of work by renouncing these particular devils that have come to possess the secular notion of work. I have attributed these false notions to three sources, the capitalist, the communist, and the bohemian. In speaking of these as three schools of thought, I endow them with a greater formality than generally known to their disciples. The average guy one meets has never perhaps identified the sources precisely, yet he has, almost through a process of osmosis, absorbed work-notions attributable to these three schemes of living. The average wage-earner might actually renounce either of these three and yet inadvertently be in their debt for his training. It is well to bear in mind that it is humanly impossible to be as sterile of ideas as the cartoonist's American is supposed to be. It is our habit as a people to deny the source of our ideological being, yet obviously the notions we possess must have come from somewhere. They were not (as the Irish say) just licked off the grass.

### **capitalism's attitude toward work**

Industrial capitalism, as it reached maturity, was hard put to invent a philosophy to justify its existence. Since it knew no other source from which to borrow respectability it took some spiritual concepts from Christianity and twisted them to suit its purpose. The situation it felt called upon to justify was the

obvious mal-distribution of wealth which compelled most men to work at unrelieved drudgery while a few wallowed in profitable inactivity. To soothe bothered consciences so as to make capitalistic comfort complete, it invented a notion of work which would console rich and poor alike. Thus came into being the notion which quieted the laboring classes, namely, that drudgery was designed by an all-merciful God as a means by which sinners might painfully discharge the debt accrued by their sins. This notion, conveniently, passed religious inspection simply because it happened to be half-true. The notion which followed from this, as night follows the day, was that the man of prosperous inactivity was so because of his virtue. Wealth, in as much as it freed a man from servility, became a mark of election. It was in this way that work became identified with sin, and means became identified with virtue, a notion which endures (with less theological support) up unto the present day. Manicured finger-nails and well-creased clothing continue to be a mark of election, and hard labor is looked upon as a penalty for crime. Unionists seem to seek insatiably for less work and more leisure. The wage-earner endures the week's pain only in the hope of week-end beatitude. Vacation spots are called "paradises." We imagine saints as being fairly inactive people. In his spare time the laborer dons the garb which the well-to-do wear daily and flees to spots where he can be attended by flunkies.

### **the other side**

The communist does not like to work either. He regards it as an injustice that bananas must be picked and peeled before they are eaten. Although he has a predilection for overalls, he likes them creased. He agrees with the capitalist that vacation-land is a paradise; his sole gripe is that paradise has a cover charge. His basic revolt is against creatureliness. He balks at necessity and envies the god who can do things gratuitously, without compulsion or effort. The Soviet Park of Culture and Rest is another Central Park, an Arboretum of Atrophy. An elaborate disdain for honest sweat prompts him to seek the perfumed couch of affluence. His solution to the problem of men standing on top of one another is to put everyone on top and let men stand in mid-air, in imitation of medieval paintings of the Communion of Saints.

### **how the bohemian feels**

The bohemian revolted against the economics of the capitalist and the politics of the communist. He also revolted against the constrictions of Christianity. He is, to put it simply, a revolting

person. In order to justify his existence as a non-participant in gainful employment, he felt called upon to insist that work is mainly a form of self-expression in no way related to the crass necessity of filling one's stomach. He broke up the marriage between necessity and invention, implying that the only honorable motivation for human labor is an unsuppressable spiritual burp. At one time the bohemian called this motivation "inspiration." As an animating force it was not unlike certain "religish" people's reference to the Holy Spirit. Practically, in both cases it serves as a cover-up for a stubborn determination to get their own way and do as they darn well please.

The bohemian's only criterion for measuring work is that it be satisfying—to him. He poses this self-satisfaction as being honorable as compared with the compulsion of corporal necessity. In his mind, the artist is the only true worker. The artist is moved by no definable compulsion whether it be courtesy or justice. If he *must* work, then it is for the same reason that a sneezer must sneeze. That is why the visitor to salons of current art, after seeing the art objects, feels as though someone had sneezed in his face.

### **to work ourselves out of it**

Summarily, all these three opinions of work, generally held in some mixture by the average man today, have this one point in common: we work only to be free of the necessity of working. Working is a way of relieving oneself either of corporal necessities or emotional compulsions. The state of non-working is regarded as more dignified and preferable to that of diligence.

It is unfortunate that any individual who accepts the bohemian, capitalistic or communist ideas of work will find in most of our towns and cities an active group of people more than ready to go along with him, whereas the convinced Christian worker will generally find himself to be alone and lonely in his views. Christian convictions in regard to work are socially unconfirmed. The sacrament of mature Christianity has not yet replaced infantile ethics in our religious scheme of things. As a result of this, much like the early Christians, individuals must seek confirmation of their views not in their local surroundings but in literature sent out by wandering apostles. The writings of Eric Gill and Father McNabb, O.P., have gone far toward prescribing new directions in this field of work. The Catholic Worker paper has nurtured Christian notions of work for a long time. *The Catholic Art Quarterly* is an up-to-date source of good thinking which avoids



the esoteric and will strengthen the convictions of anyone intent upon redeeming the workday.

### **the Christian scheme of work**

The Christian philosophy of work was developed over a period of more than fifteen centuries, whereas the philosophy behind modern work is hardly three centuries old. Consequently, to the modern mind, Christian notions of work are both strange and elaborate. Since it would be impossible to do justice in a few pages to a system that represents many centuries of development, I have chosen to discuss only a few Christian notions of work that differ most remarkably with those currently held.

We have been reminded by the Popes that it is as natural for man to work as it is for birds to fly. In other words, creative activity is essential to human perfection. It is not merely the result of sin or his fallen nature. To identify work with the drudgery, disappointment and frustration that usually accompany it is a gross error. Admittedly all this unpleasantness *is* a chastisement for sin, yet there is far more to work than just pain. The farmer not only sweats and strains, he also produces wheat and cabbages. The concert violinist may lose six pounds as he perspires through his concert, but his audience did not come just to watch his agony; they came to enjoy his music. Work normally involves a good deal of drudgery, but drudgery is not the essence of work. The birth of a child has its labor-pains, but these pains are soon forgotten in the delight that another child has been born. The fault, for example, with much factory labor is not that there is drudgery connected with it, but that there is *nothing but* drudgery connected with it. Instead of being a daily nativity it is usually just a daily abortion—all pain and no fruit.

It has been traditionally understood that man at his work is an instrument of God's providence. We have been created as agents of our own survival and perfection. The way in which God provides for mankind's needs is through mankind's labor. When we pray for our daily bread we do not expect a shower of ham sandwiches from heaven. This is not the usual method of providence. We do expect, when we pray for bread, to receive our share of the fruits of human labor. Man's daily work is the daily instrument of divine providence.

### **creation as a necessity**

A point that should be clarified here is the relation between necessity and gratuity in creative activity. Gratuity may be an unfamiliar word, but by definition it means without compulsion or without necessity. Christianity teaches that our perfection must

built upon our being creatures. A creature is a thing of needs, just as a creator, strictly speaking, is one who needs nothing. As human beings we need God, we need each other, we need food, clothing, shelter and many other things. Since God is all powerful, all knowing, and all merciful, having need of Him is a strength, not a weakness. The man who resents necessity is, in fact, cursing his very existence. He who would be free of necessity, never compelled to pray, work or love, desires to be God. He is a presumptuous fool.

This creaturely necessity is a thing we share also with the beasts. Does this imply that human effort is a beastly thing, not too different from the activity of ants or beavers? No! Human work, because it is a co-creative rational activity, possesses a kind of divine spark. True, a man just like a beast can be prompted to work simply by his stomach, but he can also be moved to effort in the same fashion that God is moved—through *love*. The Christian dispensation favors us with the privilege of working intimately and familiarly with God. Our work can now be done in the company of Christ, not prompted solely by beastly necessity, but by gratuitous love of our brothers in Christ! Thus, you see, our Brother Christ perfects the law of human necessity by making it the occasion for supernatural charity! The Christian can rejoice in the compulsion to work, because the compulsion to work is a call to love as God loves. God's creative acts are acts of love; also, thanks to Christ, our co-creative acts can be an extension of this same divine love!

### **working together**

One of the unfortunate notions which we picked up during the nineteenth century, an inheritance from the Renaissance, is the conviction that only the work of the individual artist can be truly creative. This is utter nonsense! The most usual and normal kind of work is *collaboration*. Most men in all ages have worked together daily to produce some common good. The lone worker has always been the exception. It is true that the enormous subdivision of work devised by our factories, provoked by profit regardless of the good of the worker, has become so grotesque that it can hardly be regarded as work at all. It might be better defined as a penance. Yet a certain subdivision of work is not only normal but often to be preferred. For example, who would prefer a one-man-band to a symphony orchestra? Would it have been preferable that the Cathedral at Chartres be raised by one man? Which is the greater work of genius, a Shakespearean sonnet or the English language? Remember that symphonic

music, cathedrals and languages, all human artifacts, were the products of men working together.

It is well to keep the above point in mind especially when we are considering social reform. The reformers are doomed to disappointment who imagine that the restoration of creative work means to provide each worker with his own individual studio. Work can be done by teams of free men, and it is such collaboration that could practically replace today's crews of wage-slaves.

### **nice work...if you can get it**

Millions of workers today are involved in mechanical labor to which a Christian philosophy of work cannot be applied. Whatever the worker's will in the matter might be, the end and methods of the work have been already prescribed. Accept it he can, as a penance, but no amount of acceptance as a penance will convert it into co-creative work. Wage-earners so involved are inclined to laugh at the Christian philosophy of work because it seems so far-fetched and impracticable—for them.

Personally I am more concerned about the mass of wage-earners than I am about lone artists. I refuse to admit that the present state of affairs is immutable. Man devised the factory method, so man can replace it with something better. It will be far less difficult to change the work system than it will be to restore souls to Christ. As Catholics we are pledged to the latter, so perhaps we can make the former reform a by-product of our apostolic efforts.

To my mind there is only one great reason why persons otherwise convinced permit their workday to be vitiated by secular methods of work: they lack the will to do otherwise. I do not put the blame wholly upon the individual who finds himself swallowed up in the factory-office rat race; my reference is to a common will. To make myself clear about this *common will*, let me point out that there are many good things that cannot be accomplished by individuals alone, no matter how strong their intentions. No one person can, for example, decide to raise a family; at least two wills are required to make such a decision. No one person can decide to build a community; it requires many wills, a common will, to accomplish so complicated a task. Christians today lack the common will to reform the workday. They are deterred from their good intentions by any enumeration of the difficulties involved.

I cite as evidence of this lack of common will the fact that our schools, even Catholic schools, generally *prepare* us for secular employment by failing to prepare us *for Christian service*. As



children we are given neither the enthusiasm nor competence to turn a living through honest and skillful service. If the thousands who graduate from our Catholic schools and colleges were all prepared and competent to render honest service, and were then frustrated from doing so by an unsympathetic secularism, I would agree that the ideal was impracticable. The fact is that thousands of Christian wage-earners must confess with the unjust steward, "To dig I am not able," and it is this incompetence which forces them to accept capitalist, communist, and bohemian standards of work.

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## Art

**T**HE fine arts are not man's most necessary creative work, but they should have an honored place in the Christian life. Mr. Stancioff is a frequent contributor to Integrity.

**Marion Mitchell Stancioff:** Art is a function natural to man but not to man alone. We find artifacts of a high order in animal societies. Bees, beavers and many kinds of birds are admirable architects. Our ears are too much filled with symphonic sound for us to notice a further art of which certain birds are masters. Whereas our ancestors, accustomed only to the simple notes of reeds or strings or horns or human voices, were better able to discern and to admire the excellent musicianship of the birds. Ranging through the animal kingdom we can find countless proofs of that fine skill which is properly called art.

Living as we do in an age which has lost the significance of words we are almost shocked to discover what was once meant by art. My dictionary says that the word "art" means simply: "skill, probably originally skill in fitting or joining, akin to artus, joints, arma, arms, armus, shoulder joint." Perhaps this seems to put art in a lowly place. Yet in this fitting, this joining together of parts lies a world of wonders.

### potential artists

Some degree of art or skill is natural then to certain species, one of which is man. If art is in the nature of man, all men are potentially artists. Nightingales are not divided into artists and non-artists. Yet when they are kept in cages they lose interest in song. So in our dehumanized industrial society a disastrous cleavage has opened up between the artist and the non-artist. The split is not wide enough for them to be out of earshot. They can still call rude names: Philistine and Babbitt or highbrow and culture vulture. (This last epithet brings the suggestion of a decaying society, for only where culture is dying do vultures gather. But let us keep in mind that where there is no culture there is literally no society at all. Cult and culture spring from the same root. Where the "cult"—that is the ritual service of divine powers—thrives there will thrive also those forms of intellectual and manual dexterity which we call arts, and which taken together constitute human culture. Failing birds of better omen vultures are more cheering than no birds at all.) So those who practise the arts or value them have become estranged from the rest of men.

to look upon art as on a mystery not related in any way to life. If we return to the simple meaning of the word we find no magic there. In Italy today a man will say admiringly of his fellow worker—be he a plumber or an architect—"*e un artista.*" Circus people still speak of "sleight of hand artists."

The word art widens from its primary sense to describe the delicate precision of the dancer, the clean cut of the carver, the virtuosity of the violinist. From there it goes on to include the unperturbable dignity of Egyptian sculpture, the huge breadth of Homer, the serenity of Han statuettes, the contained violence of the Veian Apollo, the peaceful perfection of Virgil, the domed complexity of Byzantine churches with their jewelled colors, the sweet and stately splendor of the *Divine Comedy*, the tenderness of the Sienese and the glowing warmth of the Venetian painters, the rollicking and tragic richness of Shakespeare, the beatific completeness of Bach, the seraphic sweetness of Mozart, and in short all the treasures of our heritage.

## Art and religion

This "art" which holds so much that we love, and which moves us so deeply, is it not more than mere "skill in fitting together"? Is art not more nearly a "religious experience"? Both these questions demand, deserve our honest thought. We shall find the answer by going to the root of the word "religion." What does it mean? Most of the ancients agreed it meant to *bind together*. It is a putting back of the pieces, a making whole again. So art and religion are close kin, they are both a "joining." *Art joins part to part, religion joins the parts to the whole.* Religion reconstructs that general view of the universe which can alone reconcile man to his place in it, while art deepens man's perception of its parts and of their relation with the whole and with each other.

So art and religion though not synonymous are inextricably intertwined. Scholarship seems to have proved that all art is religious not only in essence but in origin. The admirable beasts painted in caves by Aurignacian men are recognized as being of no directly practical use and must belong to "hunting magic," must be therefore an appeal to "powers" of some kind. Dancing and song, it has long been admitted, began as ritual; and the Greeks themselves remembered that their drama, their poetry, their comedy, had come down to them from the feasts of the gods. Most of the great sculptures which survive from ancient times honor either the gods or the spirits of the dead, and are therefore directly or indirectly religious. Some peoples, it is true, paid



greater attention to the doings of men, like the Assyrians who turned their fine hieratic sculpture to political purposes, for glorification of their arrogant empire. But generally speaking only the decadent periods of antiquity have left us examples of secular sculpture. As for architecture, though we hear of royal palaces, we have before us only remains of temples. All early works of architecture which have come down to us seem to have been erected for ritual purposes. And so with astronomy and logic and medicine and mathematics which began in the valley of the Nile and in Mesopotamia (and perhaps near the Indus and the Yellow River too) by being strictly hieratic skills.

### **mother and child**

Religion is thus known to be the mother of the arts. In all religions mothers and their children are distinct and separate persons. Religious experience and artistic experience are not identical. Art is skillfully combining elements of reality gives us a deepened sense of being, while religion by showing us reality gives access to the Source of Being Itself. The first mediates life, while the other gives *life* ("I am the Life") immediately. But this deepened sense of being, this quickening of the pulse, this thing the Greeks call *poesis*, and a modern aesthete calls "life-enhancing," is a wonderful and exquisite delight. It is not surprising then that many who experience it stop there, unaware that it provides only a fragmentary vision. That is how art has become to numbers of people a substitute for religion.

### **the limitations of art**

The religion of art, we have said, offers many pleasures. In all religions true and false it also demands a discipline, zeal, attention, considerable sacrifices. But it cannot give its devotees what they need in the crises of life, in pain and parting and poverty and death and disaster. (I did hear of a Frenchman who kept his courage during hours of Nazi torture by repeating to himself the *Alexandrides* of Racine. I can only wonder and admire. One admires and wonders at stoic courage always and everywhere. But I do not admire and rejoice as I rejoice over the bravery of Bragadino, the Venetian captain who while he was being flayed alive repeated the psalm *Miserere mei, Deus*, until having been skinned to the waist he died.) Art cannot be a religion. It cannot comfort the dying nor command obedience unto death. To speak in defense of Post-impressionism is unthinkable, and martyrdom for the music of Chopin is a patent absurdity. Men die for what they believe to be *true*, not for what they consider beautiful. Beauty is only an aspect, a part of truth. But it is an inseparable

art, and when beauty fades it means some part of the truth is lying up. We are so used to the sight that we forget it until we are plunged by a book, a picture or a place into a time when truth and beauty flowered together. This silting up of religious *life*—in which beauty's wilting is only a symptom—is the chief tragedy of modern times. The life is still there, deep down, like a subterranean river, but it has withdrawn from the surface. All that is visible to the outsider is a dreary waste of sand and stones with a little stagnant pool here and there to show that water still runs low.

Most people look no deeper and never find it. It is hard to take on trust that the hurried perfunctory gesture pours the water of life. Why should people believe us when we say that this way is paradise? Only a meeting with personal holiness—and the face of God—can carry conviction of the Beatific Vision. So, with religion grown dusty, people, particularly young and sensitive people, turn to art to save them from a world "seared with smoke, bleared, smeared with toil" and souls smudged with greed and minds enmeshed in calculations. By contrast works of art seem very fountains of life and their creation man's last unpolluted activity. The grace of a Mozart or a Modigliani seem the only "grace" left, and the creators of beautiful things come to be venerated as saints and high priests and medicine men.

There is a romantic tendency to worship particularly those troubled titans of art who seem to have suffered and struggled to solve spiritual problems. It is a cult of their personalities rather than of their works. From this cult of the promethean personality always struggling and searching, always at loggerheads with creation we quite logically fall into a cult of "tormented" works. Not those works which show forth *the hidden mystery of things, the relation of things with one another*, but those which are a shaking up and a breaking up. They seek to unfit and unscrew like a curious impatient child with a watch rather than to make whole and to fit together. Here the distinction between classic and romantic must be allowed to raise its hoary head again. In the first matter and form are fitted to each other, in the second matter bursts through form. Now while the forms still hold up to some extent we get the finest works of romanticism, Beethoven, and Hugo and Daumier and Pushkin. But when the form breaks up completely, either we get a new kind of unconscious classicism with figures like Baudelaire and Cezanne and Cesar Franck or else we loosen up into a sort of romantic stew with Rodin and

Zola and Kandinsky and simmer in a cauldron of "ideas" giving oblique misleading glances at heaven and earth.

### **ideas make art**

Ideas are of course the gauge of civilizations. And "art" a fitting together and not a game of hunt-the-needle-in-the-hay stack; that art which finds its ideas in the air it breathes is more successful *as art* than that which has to start looking for ideas in the junkshops of the mind. Giotto and the Greco did not have a workshop around for ideas. They and their patrons were in agreement as to matter, which left them free to form their manner. The catacomb-painters were in passionate possession of the same matter, but it had not yet become part of the social climate, so the renderings of the good shepherd and of praying saints are as perfunctory as pagan decorations at Pompei. Once a powerful idea, or, if you like, a religion has become the common heritage and daily bread of a society, it becomes both a motive and a binding agent of art and seeks and finds its suitable form. History shows that the best art is produced by those peoples who have the most coherent and highest idea of the universe and their relation to it. If Indian art after the great sculptures of the Gandhara and the cave-frescoes of Ajanta seems too riotous and rich and tangled it is because once the Vedic period was past and the Buddhist movement of Asoka had spent its force, India was lost in a confusion of contending beliefs. The prevailing ideas—that is the prevailing religion—give art its content which in its turn creates its form.

### **divorced from our life**

Art divorced from religion is unbalanced, either flaccid or convulsed, flat or timid. Religion divorced from art is dry and dreary and near to dying. These two, this mother and her daughter, cannot leave one another. When they do men leave *these*. Great numbers of people—half this nation at least—have lost religion; "It means nothing to them." Great numbers of people no longer enjoy art; it too "means nothing to them." The people lead cramped lives, hopelessly confused by the universe and seeking a solution in materialist creeds or forgetfulness in material pleasures. They are stunted beings in whom the feeling for art survives only as infatuation with the skill of a pitcher or the structure of an engine. They are distorted beings who stuff the starved spirits only with the excitement of political fanaticism or the most primary emotions of sex.

### **"religious" art**

Though we have said that art and religion cannot be parted it must not be thought that their relationship is always obvious



some times and places the relationship is more evidently intimate than at others. Moreover it is clear to any one who has ever been inside a church that religious subject-matter does not of itself constitute religious art. For a few hundred years at least art with a religious subject-matter has usually been neither religious nor art. So let us dismiss at once from our minds the crude idea that there is a necessary connection between religious art and religious subjects. Fundamentally *all art is religious if it is art at all*. It is so by its function of linking and fitting, of showing forth order and harmony, all of which is in the highest sense good.

*It is so also by its method of work.* I don't remember who said that "perfect attention is a form of prayer," but I remember that Bergson said that the artist must have "a kind of detachment from life; as it were a virginal manner of thinking." Self-forgetfulness to any created thing is a kind of contemplation. It implies true reverence for the Creator (rare, alas, even among those who profess to know Him). An absolutely serious portrait by Holbein or Velasquez, a sketch by Guardi full of the sparkle of water and light and air, a nude by Renoir—"painted as one paints lovely fruit" he used to say—are more exactly religious than all the slick Madonnas and the sloppy Resurrections that Christendom cheer to. One has but to look at a Chardin to know that an apple painted with respect is obviously holier than a sentimental angel on a Christmas card. This ingredient of respect is all important. To "respect" is to look again, to look attentively. To look again—*convertere*—is to look with love. That is the obvious starting point for every artist.

## through our senses

There is more to this "looking with love" than you might think. We are not discarnate spirit. God made us of flesh, gave us senses with which delightfully to perceive the sounds and smells and shapes and colors which surround us. It is the logical error of a materialist age to divorce intellect from sense, to approach the arts from the purely intellectual angle. The arts reach us through our senses. So their first task is to appeal to eye or ear or sense of touch or to that mysterious sense of balance which is the arbiter of excellence in architecture and sculpture and landscaping and dancing and any art which involves the use of space and mass and movement.

Following Aristotle Saint Thomas said: "There is nothing in the intellect which is not first in the senses." To neglect or offend the senses while demanding the attention of the mind is

the reversal of the natural order. In painting *the* criterion is the eye, as in music it is the ear. Even in the more complex matter of poetry which deals directly in ideas the appeal is first through the senses. Most poets go from the outer world inward, translating the sign into significance. For God speaks to man through created things and it is the special task of the artist to fathom and relate their sense and so bring others to a fresh awareness.

### **every man**

Lest I seem here to be saying (what I have heretofore denied) that the artist is a sort of prophet and private secretary of the Lord, I must remind the reader that *all men are by nature artists*. They are not by any means all great artists, even potentially. But given the tools and the social impetus and the needful leisure almost every human child will do something that could be called art. The Navaho weaving ancient patterns in his blanket is an artist as well as the choreographer of a new ballet; the chef composing a succulent dish is an artist and so is the tailor cutting a beautiful coat. They are artists of the same kind, though not of the same calibre as Tintoretto painting the life of Jesus on the walls of San Rocco. All are artists who make the objective effort to work with their utmost skill. It is not for nothing that the coins in the parables were named "talents." Christ promises a hideous fate to those who bury theirs. He accepts no excuse. It is one of His harshest sayings. In this He is, as He says, a hard Master.

### **the unsurpassed art**

There is one art however which surpasses and owing to circumstances often evinces and makes a hay of all the rest. There is an art of living by which all things are fitted together in just proportion and by which life itself achieves a new quality. *And those indefinable but supremely important elements, proportion and quality, are the essential ingredients of every art.* so their integration into the very structure of life is the summit of all art. It is supremely "fitting" that men should live in harmony with the order of creation and so make their lives their most perfect work. When Yeats had grown old and wise, he wrote these lines:

The intellect of man must choose  
perfection of the life or of the work  
and if it take the second must refuse  
a heavenly mansion, raging in the dark.

# Man and Manufacturing

*EXT is an article on the problem of uncreative work by John C. Hicks who lives and works in Detroit, Michigan.*

**John C. Hicks:** Agrarian . . . Distributist . . . Eric Gill . . . Christian Industrialism. This is a litany that sometimes inspires fight among practical people. They will say that you cannot turn the clock back, even though in parts of the world the clock has been turned back two thousand years. You may call it the green revolution, and it is still a green valley between the rugged and bare peaks of capitalistic and communistic technology which are so efficient that they threaten to cancel each other out.

Here appended are some brief notes out of many that could be written on a form of agrarianism. There is need for a better word since I leave the rural life part of it to others. Being only a factory clerk who has read a few books I concern myself with the restoration of human work. There are some things to be said from the "what should be" point of view, which things occupy the first section of this article. After this I shall give some reasons why I think a concern with the problem of human work in the factory is of practical value.

## Interchangeable hearts

The advances in medicine which make possible the interchange of human organs, and even the mechanical reconstruction of human organs, symbolize what takes place in the factory. The factory also uses parts of people interchangeably. Yves Simon has said: "The essence of humanism is the use of a reference to man as a principle of integration." The factory uses a mechanical principle of integration to organize humans. By using a principle outside its human members and by using only parts of men it serves to disintegrate men. It achieves its wonders with an advanced knowledge of inanimate nature and a backward knowledge of human nature.

A man demands to be taken as a whole. Work at its best should be whole work, the following of a vocation or the flowering of the worker's best gifts. Whole work demands the co-operation of mind and body. The factory co-ordinates a few minds and many bodies, through a medium of planning and machinery. It is a monstrosity with a huge body and a small mind.

Father Regamey says in *Poverty*: "God does not do violence to His creatures but takes them with divine humility just as He



made them or as they have mismade themselves and leads them to their end according to the laws of their nature."

The factory has less humility and it attempts to redesign man in a fashion to fit into the factory according to the nature of the machine. It does violence to men in using only a part and making that part conform as closely as possible to the machine. A man working for himself will manage his own movements and work at a speed variable according to his mood. The speed of the machine does not vary. To achieve what is called efficiency the factory dictates every movement of the worker and the speed at which he moves. Since his principle of organization is not human but mechanical, he must follow the machine when it is working at its most efficient peak. Of course the factory rewards the worker and he voluntarily surrenders such powers as it needs for this reward.

It was Father Vann who pointed out that the "glamor girl" was an abstraction. For the same reason the factory worker is an abstraction from a whole man to a dissected man; dissected to use only the appropriate parts. This gives a man as a worker a value only in the factory community; a location instead of a vocation.

### **"perfection without purpose"**

This is what Juenger called technology. It is an apt description of the factory, because the factory violates not only the integrity of the person, but the right of the worker to progress toward a goal, to increase, to mature, to grow. Since man is an organism he develops in body and mind through growth. One of the prime factors of his development is his work. By doing he learns to do.

In the factory all development is in the machine. Every change-over witnesses an alteration of the machine to achieve a more efficient flow of materials into the finished product. As part of the machine performing a dictated function the worker does not grow in skill, he only develops a callousness to the monotony. Since only his energy is used (the factory loves to speak of human energy) he deteriorates as his energy grows less with age or sickness. At a time when, in human work, a man should have reached a peak of skill and wisdom, the factory machine regards him as a negative component since his motion and speed are less, since he fits into the machine with increasing friction. Only the power of the union then keeps him at his job, and the only solution the factory can offer is retirement.

Machine work gave him no opportunity for interior development or progress in skill. Change of operation gave him no wi

m to see the whole. Maturity which normally comes with self-regulated action or progress in virtue is denied him.

## **Perpetual motion**

The third way in which the factory violates the right to man work is in its lack of a common goal or an opportunity to work for the common good. For this reason Drucker has said that the corporation is an illegitimate government since it cannot in its nature work for the good of all its members. One of the excuses given for technology is that it will make the necessary things easily obtainable, and so provide leisure for the proper development of cultural things that aid maturity. But the time spent by the average machine tender leaves his inner self unfitted for true leisure, since he has not been able to use things to progress from the material to the spiritual. Such leisure he will have will only be an emptiness, which can be filled only with technical entertainment. The falseness of the promise is shown in the fact that the factory worker is usually only oriented toward escape from the factory.

The factory is not an organization for the common good, because you cannot organize a river. Factory products all seek the name of being stream-lined. It serves to emphasize the method of their making. Factory work is organized as a flow of materials into a finished product. The men are secondary and only placed in relation to the best flow of materials. One of the satisfactions of human work is the masterpiece, or at least a work completed. In the factory the only permanent feature is the continual flux. The assembly line is the mechanical center of this fluidity. Nothing gets done. Nothing is completed.

Periodically the factory is shut down and technically reorganized. The model is changed and the flow is halted for a while. This model change is only the beginning of another kind of flow in which the assembly line is only the symbol. This is the dynamism that keeps the factory running. It is the pendulum that swings between the new model and obsolescence.

The structure of mass production is doomed never to rest. If it rests the machines will stop. Never can it produce the masterpiece. That is why with all the magic of mechanization the whole thing would collapse were it not for the factory's twin crutches: advertising which must keep confusion between luxuries and necessities, so that the latest is always the imperative; installment buying which keeps the worker tied to the machine by mortgaging his future.

The machine which makes riches while in motion is a burden at rest; it means empty factory, depreciation. The economy must expand by incessant replacement of old models by the new. The circle of consumption becomes the wheel of fortune, a kind of perpetual motion machine.

If we question this idea, look at the present situation. The war economy provides a seemingly bottomless consumption. If we take pride in our present prosperity, let us look at its underpinning, the actualities of poverty and need in almost all of the other parts of the world and the continual threat of the explosion of all the machinery.

### **the question of machines**

Before going on to more practical matters we might add a note on machinery. We are not subscribing to the error of condemning machines as evil. We are condemning the use of them as mechanical process including humans as parts, for their use to try and solve mechanically or irresponsibly the human problem which can only be solved in a human and responsible way. The human way includes error and sin, and the effort to construct a new redemption with a mechanical freedom from error leads only to the servile state.

We would divide machines thus: 1) The machine as tool under a man's whole power, or a separate power under man's guidance. 2) As a separate power forcing its rhythm of work on men, as the assembly line. 3) The machine as system of law and design which organizes the flow of human work, as the factory. 4) The machine of law and design which controls all human activity for private ends, such as the big-brother state.

The machines that are man's tools are good. Those whose tools are men are dangerous. They cannot be excused as the necessary evils of our abundance. They must be judged by their effect on men. The good done to materials by machines never outweighs the evil done to human beings. A man may sacrifice himself for the common good, but he cannot be forced to do so.

### **let's be practical**

What has gone before is but a suggestion of the philosophical case against factory work. This is an important study, I believe, and will be based on Saint Thomas and his modern interpreters such as Maritain and Simon. Yet this is judging what should be and neglects what is, some will say. For this reason I have selected three practical reasons why the fight for human work is not impractical but very worth while.



The first reason is that it is truly American. In this time of crisis, while we must be busy with what we have, we must work for the world we hope is in becoming. The idea that the true genius of America is in small property and human work is developed by Henry Bamford Parkes in *The American Experience*. He says: "And when America has failed, it has usually been because it has not been true to its own genius but has been too much influenced by doctrines and precedents derived from Europe. The most notable example of this tendency was the Federalist and Hamiltonian politico-economic system, which was deliberately copied from European models and was based on a European belief in a ruling class and distrust of democracy. It was this system, embodied in American constitutional law, that made possible the growth of capitalism with its attendant inequality and insecurity."

I submit this as an idea to counter the type of big business propaganda that attempts to identify all things American with monopolistic capitalism.

Parkes also says: "The animating principle of American nationality has been the belief that the average man can be trusted with freedom and responsibility . . . and that whenever he finds adequate opportunity for exercising initiative, hidden talents and energies will be released for constructive purposes. This belief, derived from the Christian faith in the infinite value of the individual soul . . . constitutes the greatest moral and spiritual resource of the American people."

This is a small sample of justification for the idea that agrarianism is American. The factory system, which is based upon a distrust in the individual, will strike its greatest source of the productivity it seeks when it looks for "the hidden talents" in the average factory worker.

This brings us to my second reason why the agrarian doctrine of human work is practical. The men of big business themselves are at last becoming concerned with it. This is summed up in an article in the July *Readers Digest* entitled "Humanizing Industry—A New Revolution." Management is becoming concerned with bringing back the factory worker to his human stature. The article quotes Dostoevski: "If it were desired to reduce a man to nothing . . . it would be necessary only to give his work a character of uselessness." We have read elsewhere where research is being conducted by colleges at the behest of industrial firms in human relations in industry. They are spending a lot of money and much labor, it is true, to find out things which they could have read in Saint Thomas. If science finds wisdom through measure-

ment, it may be unscientific but it is at least a beginning, a beginning that agrarians should seize upon and expand.

### **something for the unions**

The third reason why I think work for the humanization of factory labor is practical is that it follows directives in the social encyclicals of the Popes. Catholics interested in restoring social order have worked with and through the unions especially in the promotion of the industry council idea. This idea is promoted at present as a construction from the top of union and management groups for the regulation of economic activities. It has been suggested that some agrarian ideas are opposed to practical unionism as the theoretical is opposed to the practical. This should not be true, since those working for a better division of property and more human work conditions are working for the same ultimate ends as the unions. The unions however were not begun from the top. They were begun in the agitation of small groups that grew into the present strong organizations. Father Von-Nel Bruening says: "Any attempt to realize the vocational order by violating the principle of subsidiarity would by this very fact be contrary to nature and in contradiction to the idea of the vocational order."

The principle of subsidiarity in this connection means to make a beginning at the bottom to attempt to restore responsibility and purpose in the work of the individual worker which will strengthen both his bond with his working community and his bond with his union, since the unions too have problems with the indifference of the rank and file.

The unions cannot rest in agitation for a mere division of the profits and security. They must first expand their activities to include white-collar workers. Also by working for the humanization of work they can bring back the old guild idea of craftsmanship and pride in the work. They can explore the ideas of group work that were brought out in the last war as against the assembly line effect of pitting worker against worker.

They should also lend their strength to the many trends toward profit sharing and the sharing of responsibility. These carry out the other notable recommendation of the encyclicals to restore to the worker a proprietary interest to replace a wage-earner's indifference in the working community.

These things are not opposed to, but can work together with other efforts to establish working communities which compete with the present ones and attempt to set a new course. Examples

may be seen in the working communities in France and in attempts here at the restoration of rural living combined with part-time factory work.

These few suggestions will, it is hoped, show that there is much room both for study of the situation and for practical moves toward solutions. The solutions will be many harmonized to one end of a peaceful and stable economy. Even in this each one works according to his own lights, not according to one monolithic solution, but keeping to the healthy pluralism which Maritain suggests and which the free climate of America still makes possible.

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### CONFESSION

I simply have a horra  
of *ora et labora*.

# BOOK REVIEWS

## Creative Activity in the Home

### THE CATHOLIC ELEMENTARY ART GUIDE

Volume V, 1952-1953

The Catholic Art Association, \$1.00

Ade Bethune's lucid diagrams, and woven in with comments on the Christian spirit of work, prayer, liturgy, art, for nine projects: prayer nook and carved crucifix, rosary, holy water font, nativity figures and Christmas gifts, candle holders, altar cloth for home, Holy Eucharist wall hanging family diptych. There are photographs of children with completed work, photographs of ancient and modern Christian art, and the whole thing is notebook size so mothers and teachers may keep the pages safely between covers. What makes the heart leap highest is that here is both eloquence and practicality in a beginning lesson in the training of taste and discrimination, something heretofore unavailable to so many devout but *artistically astray* Catholic families.

This art guide can be ordered from the Elementary Committee, 111 West Bancroft Street, Toledo 6, Ohio. There are special rates on group orders.

MARY REED NEWLAND

## An Important Book

### THE MISSIONARY SPIRIT IN PARISH LIFE

By Abbe G. Michonneau  
Newman, \$2.75

Joseph Stalin, who ought to know said a long time ago that "Revolutions are made by militant minorities." Father Michonneau, a Paris diocesan priest organized a militant minority of his confreres who made a holy revolution in Colombes, the paganized industrial suburb of Paris. That astounding operation was however the *second* revolution; we got the account of it in his *Revolution in a City Parish*. The *first* was made by a militant minority of one, Father Michonneau himself. It consisted in his making over the chaplain-type priest who followed the custom of waiting for "my Father's business" to come to him, and got little of it to do, into the apostle-type priest who goes after the "business" and gets more than he can handle. It is this sparking of the pentecostal fire that the Abbé tells about in the book under review.

And there is a *third* revolution in it. The Abbé insists in his new book, and keeps reiterating his insistence, that the holy fire cannot be kept aflame nor the revolution kept from being a dud unless the priests be organized into "teams" who live a communal life. The "team" is his apparatus. He gives no information in this book about the team's organization and government; he does say that his new "team" set-up is being adopted in many places, has captured the imagination of the diocesan youth and has brought an increase of vocations to the diocesan clergy. Maybe a third book will furnish the interesting data of how the priest-team apparatus is organized, lives and works. One of the chapters of



s interesting book is "Some Materials for a Missionary Spirituality"; lists among them mortification, meditation, faith, hope, charity and graciousness," called, by the Abbé, a cardinal missionary virtue. This chapter is refreshingly *non nova sed nove*. Because of its possibilities, the activity of Father Michonneau will be watched by spiritual leaders with increasing interest.

REV. A. J. ROTHLAUF

## Catholicism and Politics

### PAPAL PRONOUNCEMENTS ON THE POLITICAL ORDER

By Francis J. Powers, C.S.V.  
Newman, \$3.50

It is unfortunate that due to his unique position the statements of His Holiness are seldom looked upon simply as intelligent and intelligible opinions. In

comparison with the opinions of other sociologists the pronouncements of the Pope prove to be highly respectable documents quite apart from his special gifts as Vicar of Christ. The insistence, which so often sounds like apology, that Papal teachings are primarily moral not sociological applies for some a certain inadequacy. The opposite is true. It were though a cigarette smoker were to ask for a match and were proffered instead a blow-torch. Papal prudence is more than adequate to cope with political puzzles as a result of perpetual concern with less transient matters.

Father Powers' book, as the title implies, is a compilation of statements made by various modern Popes applying to the inter-relations of citizen, state and Church. These have been taken from their contexts and arranged according to subject matter, thus making up a handy source of reference. Liberty and democracy are dealt with at some length.

It is striking that one finds in these collected statements much more liberality, and much more respect for intelligence than one would expect were his only source of information on Catholicism either enemies or patronizers of the Church. I was impressed above all by an underlying desire for unity and reconciliation between social elements rather than the partisan leanings which characterize secular views on politics. The famous biblical story concerning Solomon's wisdom came to my mind when reading these quiet pronouncements. You may recall the way in which Solomon decided between two women who claimed the same infant as her own. He offered to cut the baby in halves, knowing full well that the actual mother would cry out at such a catastrophe. Those who would wholly separate Church and state, freedom and authority, individual and government obviously have no parental concern with the parties involved else they would dread the sunderance. Dissolution is seldom a solution.

The Popes, accustomed to dealing with such magnificent paradoxes of the God-Man and the Virgin-Mother, do not find it a strain to admit the lesser paradox: "The church and state alike both possess individual sovereignty." The fact that each has a different purpose "does not exclude the difference between the two societies, still less does it require between them a cold and detached attitude of agnosticism and indifference."

This book should be welcomed into the current campaign climate in the hope that the sweet reasonableness of the Popes may prevail in an atmosphere of pious clichés and party dogmatism.

ED WILLOCK

## The Case for a Monarchy

### LIBERTY OR EQUALITY, THE CHALLENGE OF OUR TIME

By Erik von Kuehnelt-Leddihn  
Caxton, \$6.00

When President Roosevelt coined the epithet "economic royalists" he knew he had a semantic treasure. He was appealing to our

of the deepest rooted antipathies of the American people. Ours is a mixed heritage. Seventeenth century middle-class puritanism, eighteenth century aristocratic "enlightenment," nineteenth century proletarian egalitarianism have combined to create a strong emotional repulsion against monarchy. Anyone who considers the idea of royalism favorably, or even objectively, is dismissed as probably immoral and certainly insane. Due to the same elements in our background we have a further emotional entanglement in favor of democracy. The very word makes us thrill with emotion.

These two psychological peculiarities will prevent Erik von Kuehnelt-Leddihn's new book from becoming a best seller in this country. He is in favor of hereditary monarchies because he sees in them the best guarantee of liberty. He is against large-scale democracies because he sees in them the destroyers of liberty. He distinguishes between what he calls "the two antagonistic drives which divide the individual: the identitarian instinct and the diversitarian instinct. The first belongs in a certain sense to the animal nature of man, while the latter is purely human."

Democracy is by nature egalitarian and identitarian. Now the equality of souls before God is a principle of natural law which found its strongest expression in Christianity. The equality of men before the law is derived from this, and although less than a century ago it was not recognized by the constitutions of a number of our own states, it is nonetheless one of the basic principles of our ex-Christian culture. The equality in principle is far from the "egalitarianism" of democratic societies. These latter, because of the numerical rule by which they operate, inevitably tend to destroy exceptional values in favor of uniformity. Wherever there is not that "common framework of reference" which Laski maintained was one of the two indispensable factors in a viable democracy, wherever, that is, there is much disparity of creed, race, class, the majority will necessarily exercise at the very least strong propagandist pressure to produce conformity with its social pattern. Do we not say of ourselves that our society is a "melting pot," the perfect symbol of egalitarian ruthlessness? It is this identitarianism which saps men's vitality and leaves them prey to eventual tyrannies. The thesis of Kuehnelt-Leddihn's book is therefore succinctly stated in its title: *Liberty OR Equality*.

If liberty is, as the Church defines it, "the first of earthly goods," then whatever form of government best promotes liberty is the best form of government. That tyranny destroys liberty is obvious, and tyranny is therefore hateful. Despotism, even the most benevolent, is arbitrary and consequently oppressive and therefore objectionable. Oligarchy or the rule of the few quickly becomes factional and corrupt, and is therefore detestable. Democracy or the rule of the many becomes progressively more ignorant and corrupt and is therefore to be feared.

A working compromise such as Saint Thomas favored is to be found in hereditary monarchy with constitutional checks. History objectively

died shows that the hereditary principle preserves stable continuity. The responsibility of the sovereign prevents the development of demagoguery. He keeps the balance between the powerful few and the ignorant many and is himself prevented by both from abusing his position. The "divine right of kings," of which we have heard so much, was an invention of the form which feared the people. Until then there had been greater emphasis on the sovereign's divine obligations. The primitive function of kings was a magico-religious leadership of the tribe. This was a duty and discipline more than a privilege. "Even a Louis XIV, autocrat, centralist and breaker of many of the best traditions as he was, would hardly have ventured to exercise three prerogatives which 'progressive democracies' have claimed and do claim without batting an eye: prohibition of alcoholic beverages, conscription, and an income tax involving annual economic confession' to the state."

Although Kuehnelt-Leddihn favors a mixed regime, as does Saint Thomas, he disclaims absolute adherence to Thomism. He begs us to be true to the *spirit* of Thomas. Too many mediocre minds just rattle his bones to frighten the timorous and lull the infant. The worst disservice we can do the Church is to follow any method *slavishly*. It was the slavish imitation of Thomas which caused the decay and 600-year long eclipse of scholasticism. Thomas' followers were not of his intellectual stature. Nor are we. If we use his method only without his spirit the decay which will follow will bring about not another so-called "new birth" (Renaissance) but **final death**.

"Liberty, Equality, Fraternity." Besides the basic contradiction between liberty and equality there lies a further trouble in the third clause of this slogan which has intoxicated us for 150 years. Fraternity which we have been wont to think of as a kindly survival of Christian sentiment has been discovered in the light of Freud to be the keyword of our problem. Fraternity has become an anti-paternal society. Not only is the father the forgotten man or the butt of jokes but he is the danger lurking in our subconscious. The Freudian obsession with "the father image" and its consequent neurotic rejection of religion is only another symptom of the "rebellionism" of Post-Renaissance Western culture. God, kings, fathers—we hate them all. Some of us preserve a sentimental attachment to one or another of these, but as a whole the hierarchy they represent is condemned from the start. By contagion with secular thought Catholic sociologists and economists can find no adjective so damning as "paternalism." We now enjoy a "fraternalistic" culture which is anything but a brotherly one. Even among Catholics the hankering for equality has reached such a point that "Christ the Pantocrator" is forgotten and we hear frequent references to "Christ our Brother."

But no matter how much we try to forget it, fatherhood is a fact and cannot be abolished. So paternalism is always creeping back but in an unrecognized aberrational form. The dictator is the substitute father, a father whose authority is without the safeguards or limits which bind a natural father's. Since his power is personal and extra-legal, nothing can break it but violence. This leadership of the masses by a pseudo-father or fuhrer is the logical consequence of the absence of a legitimate paternal figure. Kuehnelt-Leddihn's analysis of the origins of Nazi totalitarianism is masterly and must hold even those who are temperamentally impatient

with the rest of the book. The parts played by late medieval "levelling" heresies and by Luther are well shown, and it was, as he says, "The combination of the degenerative process of Protestantism with Catholic absolutism and extremism which became such a dangerous explosive mixture." And although this to some extent explains the popular frenzy which brought Hitler to power, it must never be forgotten that *the forms he used were entirely democratic*. "It can happen" anywhere, and must be watched and prevented while there is yet a little time and some, though not much, light.

MAKION MITCHELL STANCIOFF

## A Practical Mystic

### THE LETTERS OF SAINT TERESA OF JESUS

Edited by E. Allison Peers  
Newman, \$15.00

Do not read this new edition of the letters of the great Mystic of Avila if you dabble with psychoanalysis and imagine all mysticism

as tinged with hysteria, or if you are a wishful contemplative with leanings towards constant levitations. In both cases you will have the frustrating experience of meeting the sanest, most normal person who ever planted her two feet upon this earth.

Both thick volumes stress the immense difficulties brought about by Saint Teresa's reform and the persecutions she suffered in common with Father Gracian and Saint John of the Cross. Although ruled by a complete abandonment to the will of God and permeated with the sense of the necessity of suffering for His sake, the saint shows great common sense and a rare talent for diplomacy in her dealings with the world. From God, Whom she beautifully entitles "His Majesty," she accepts everything, but from the Prince of this World—for she sees the Devil behind all these attacks—she takes nothing lying down. Always generous and forgiving in her own conduct and in her advice to her nuns, also persecuted, she nonetheless does not sugarcoat her enemy's failings. Beatrice de la Madre de Dios, who caused her such harm, is labelled as "the wretched Prioress" and her lack of intelligence is strongly brought out. She holds a candid view of many others and hopes that in all justice the machinations will finally be exposed and punished.

The main theme, of course, is the administration of her different convents. Strange to say, this reformer who enforces poverty mentions money constantly. She is concerned with the necessary dowry for the novices, with debts and provisions, with possible gifts and donations. Giving up her former plan of insecurity, she accepts, however unwillingly, the fact that all the convents must have an income since the majority have achieved it. But she insists, whenever a future nun shows extraordinary spiritual gifts, that she should be taken without a dowry and that the expense be borne by all other houses.

This forms the stout weave of the text, but all through gold is threaded discreetly but constantly. God's presence is manifest in every word, practical though it may seem, for He is Teresa's eternal rule and conscience; she states in one letter "I think no more of Teresa of Jesus." Every thought converges toward Him in perfect simplicity. In her great wisdom, the mystic advises nuns not to write about some rather unusual experiences, for experiences of this sort that cannot brand the memory



ever are not worth while recording. She shows herself very wary of ecstasies that may conjure up hallucinations and prescribes some meat to tormented religious.

Then suddenly the heart is pierced by the childish simplicity with which she writes, "God told me," and by her charming merriment at being taken for a saint—"a topsy-turvy one," she declares.

Every great experiment in reading starts streams of consciousness. To this reviewer the "letters" have suggested two reflections. In the first place, a woman however sublime remains a woman with her definite role—the reflection of Mary, Mother of all men, the successor of Eve, embodiment of nature. In the Mystical Body she will always be part body. Man needs a human companion, saints need spiritual complement. This explains the great teams of saintly men and women, where woman, Mother and Earth, brings a little human balance to man the intellectual creator. Men saints give the spirit to the rule, women saints give it life. Woman's destiny belongs in part to the relative because she creates man, but man belongs to the absolute because he begets the heritage of the Word. A saintly man resides already in heaven, and that is what bothers Saint Teresa about her two children—Father Gracian and especially the Child of Light, Saint John of the Cross. She looks up to them as great souls, but utterly doubts their ability to get on in life and does her best to protect them.

Then comes the wonder that letters written by geniuses should be so different from their masterpieces. Dostoevsky's letters to his wife are rather dull, commonplace and sweetly affectionate, concerned with the children's nurse and his wife's wardrobe. Saint Teresa's reveal a strong, lovable, salty personality. We feel very close to her when she cries out that she is tired out by the visit of a relative, apparently a crashing bore. But there is so very little sign of the great harmonies and unearthly wisdom poured forth in the *Way of Perfection* or the *Interior Castle*. Why? Because letters are produced for practical purposes and by the exercise of the human will. But masterpieces belong to this wondrous world of the angels, the world of ideas that some hold as being completely independent of the writer.

In her correspondence Saint Teresa alone holds the pen. In her works she improvises for the Holy Ghost. That is why we are faintly disappointed, but can hardly hold it against her. However, the translation by Allison Peers is beyond praise.

ANNE TAILLEFER

## The Four Last Things

### LIFE EVERLASTING

By Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, O.P.  
Herder, \$4.50

There is the temptation for us apostles of a new Christian order to get so involved with projects of social reform, discussions of human relations, ideas for the essentials and for the appurtenances of the temporal order—in short, everything from the necessity of Christian recreation to the indispensability of whole-wheat bread—that we forget what life is really about. We forget that temporal matters (even the lay apostolate!) are to be viewed in the light of eternity.

That is why it is good from time to time to have a book like Father Garrigou-Lagrange's which discusses the four last things: judgment, hell,

purgatory, and heaven. The book is concerned with doctrine rather than exhortation. That is not to imply that the author ever forgets that these are matters which concern us vitally; this is not a book which leaves us coolly contemplating the existence of hell fire. But when I say it is chiefly doctrinal I mean that the author is more intent on giving us a solid foundation of truth for our meditations on the life to come than in arousing us to an emotional pitch.

The part on heaven should assure us that "the sufferings of this life are indeed "not worthy to be compared with the glory to come," and the epilogue should reassure us that we begin living for heaven here on earth. "The life of grace is everlasting life already begun." That is what earthly life *does* matter—so long as we view it in terms of God and His eternity.

Those who have read several of Father Garrigou-Lagrange's books will be aware of his characteristic use of the same examples repeatedly. This however does not bother me in the least, and I hope it won't bother others. Profound truth can bear repetition, and what does it matter if we read "the same old thing" provided that in the end we grasp it?

DOROTHY DOHEN

## BOOK NOTES

When it was time for Sister Elizabeth of the Trinity to receive her religious name and she discovered her Prioress intended to dedicate her to the Three Divine Persons, she experienced some regret for her idea of sanctity was up to that point centered on the likeness of Jesus crucified. She was very shortly to reproach herself for this regret. Her knowledge of the Trinity reached great depths and the power of this small volume (*Reminiscences*—Newman, \$3.50) to draw souls to "the bosom of the tranquil Trinity" has reached such global proportions that her mission is ranked by some with that of Saint Thérèse as being providential for these times. "Elizabeth's spirituality is one more accessible to contemplative souls. Thérèse will always be the more popular apostle with people at large. Both are admirably suited to the needs of our age." —N. S.

*Mary in the Documents of the Church* by Paul F. Palmer, S.J. (Newman, \$2.25) is a beautiful collection of writings on Our Lady from the earliest days of the Church up to and including the promulgation of the Assumption. It is interesting to note that from the beginning the chief prerogatives of Mary were acknowledged and the various heresies that were spread against her only served to increase the devotion of her children. This book can be used for spiritual reading as well as for reference.

*In The Eternal Purpose* (Newman, \$2.25) Father Philipon, O.P., treats of our true destiny—union with God. The writing on the whole is simple and concise; the chapter "To Live Is to Be Active" should be of special help to those interested in the apostolate. —D. D.

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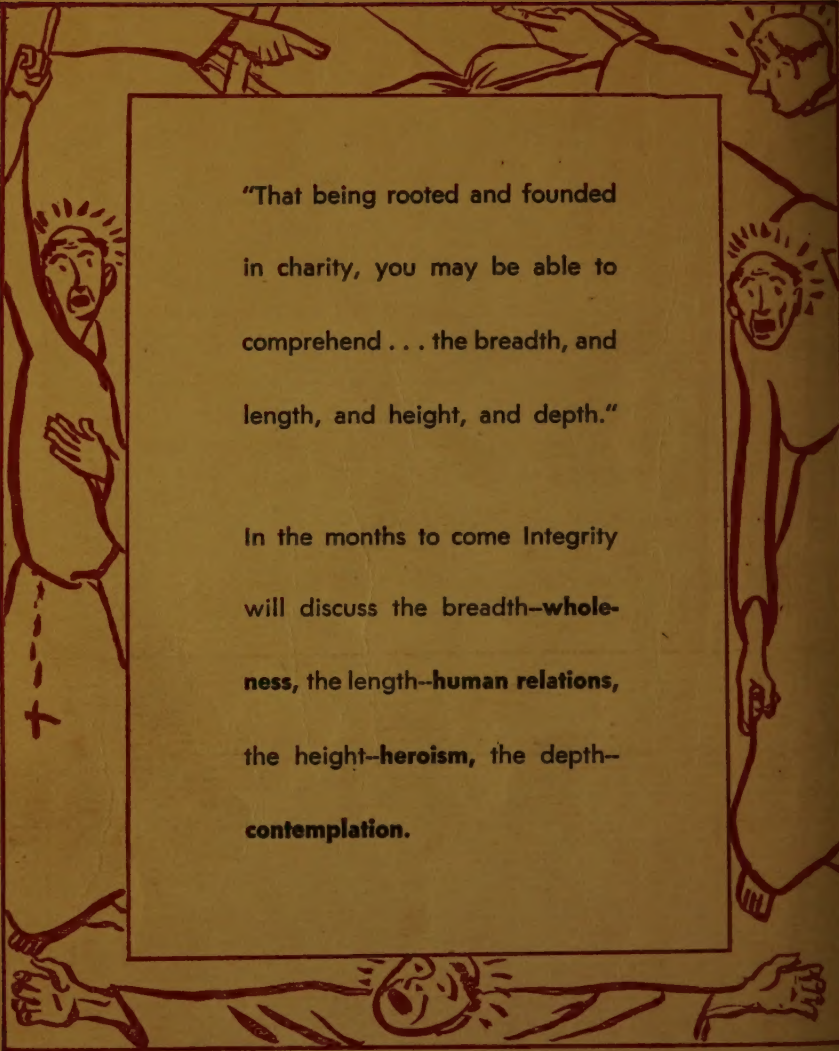
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